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Strategic Perspectives on the Reconstruction and Diachronic Interpretation of Archetypal Theolinguistic Matrices in Religious-Popular Discourse

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Insights from English, German, and Ukrainian within Indo-European and Nostratic Frameworks

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Preface

This monograph explores the intersection of linguistics, theology, and cognitive science by examining the dynamic and evolving nature of theolinguistic matrices within religious and popular discourse. The insights gathered here are derived from an in-depth analysis of linguistic phenomena across three languages—English, German, and Ukrainian—within the broader framework of Indo-European and Nostratic studies. As the world grapples with identity, faith, and language questions, this work is an intellectual bridge between ancient linguistic traditions and modern cognitive frameworks.

The complexity of religious language and its impact on individual and collective consciousness has long fascinated scholars. The authors of this monograph approach the topic to reconstruct the archetypal matrices that shape theological and popular religious communication. Through comparative and macro-comparative studies, the monograph traces the evolution of proto-language forms and their diachronic interpretation, allowing us to appreciate how religious concepts such as "righteousness", "faith", and "repentance" are embedded within metaphorical constructs and continue to evolve across time.

The methodology adopted here is both comprehensive and rigorous. The authors deconstruct religious-popular discourse by employing comparative-historical methods and cognitive-matrix analysis and reveal the underlying cognitive-linguistic mechanisms. The theolinguistic matrix of religious-popular discourse is not simply an artifact of language; it is a living, breathing structure that shapes and is shaped by faith communities across linguistic and cultural boundaries.

This work invites the reader into a scholarly conversation that seeks to understand the evolution of religious language and its profound role in constructing meaning in believers' lives. The insights provided will particularly interest linguists, theologians, and cultural historians interested in the relationship between language, faith, and identity.

We hope that this monograph will inspire further inquiry into the reconstruction of linguistic and theological paradigms and foster a deeper under-

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standing of how language continues to shape human societies' spiritual and cultural landscapes.

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Prof. Dr. Olesya Cherkhava

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Chapter 1.
Strategic Perspectives on Reconstruction and Diachronic Interpretation of the Archetypal Theolinguistic Matrix of Religious-Popular Discourse in Linguistic Comparative and Macrocomparative Studies

1.1 Strategic Perspectives on Reconstruction Technique in Linguistic Comparative Studies

Linguistic Comparative Studies have utilized the term "reconstruction" at various times, initially associated with the developers of the comparative-historical method and later, within structuralism, with Ferdinand de Saussure. According to O. M. Trubachov, while Saussure[1] set different objectives in studying worldviews, in his brief *Course* (Chapter III. Reconstructions), he acknowledged "reconstruction as the sole purpose of comparison", seeing the goal of the reconstruction as "registering the successes of linguistic science" and expressing confidence in its reliability[2]. Furthermore, the founder of structuralism had a broad understanding of the tasks of historical linguistics, as he spoke about how "it is precisely historical research that allows us to understand what a state is". However, some scholars, including Roman Jakobson[3], viewed his reflections skeptically.

At the current stage of development, Linguistic Comparative Studies continue to advance its theory, enriching it with new achievements from various fields of scientific knowledge, particularly those concerning the interpretation of the phenomenon of "reconstruction". A preliminary review of contemporary scholarly works shows the growing popularity of "reconstruction" in linguistics-related disciplines, though with highly ambiguous interpretations. This necessitates clarifying its definition, especially by examining the evolutionary trends in the scientific scope of this concept and the possibilities of using synonymous designations.

1 Gambarara D. Le entita riconstruite tra fonetica e fonologia // Problemi della riconstruczione in linguistica // *Atti del Convegno SLI.* Roma: Università di Pavia, 1977. P. 52–53.

2 Курс общей лингвистики / Ф. де Соссюр; пер. с фр. А. Сухотин; ред. Ш. Балли, А. Сеше. Екатеринбург: Изд-во Урал. ун-та, 1999. С. 219.

3 Jacobson R. The framework of language. 1980. P. 54.

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1.1.1 Strategic Perspectives on Reconstruction of Proto-Language Forms and Meanings in Classical Linguistic Comparative Studies

In lexicographic sources, the word reconstruction has the following synonymous meanings: to reform (to change into a new form), to remodel, to rearrange, to build (construct), to change (make different), to alter (to change for a purpose), to transform, to repeat, to correct, to make needed corrections[4]. In German-language thesauruses, the following lexemes are present: *nachbilden, nacherleben, wiederherstellen, sich ausmalen, kopieren, reparieren* [DSO]. To propose an optimal definition of the concept of reconstruction considering the current state of comparative studies and transdisciplinary linguistics in general, it is necessary to trace the stages of its development and identify changes in its scientific core.

The first naive understanding of **linguistic reconstruction** as a "hypothetical re-creation of extinct linguistic forms based on their later reflections, taking into account the path of linguistic development"[5] emerged at the end of the 18th century amid assumptions about the relationship of *the ancient Sanskrit language* as a literary variant of Old Indic, used in the artistic, religious, philosophical, and scientific works of the East-West and Central Asian and European cultures, and one of *the oldest religions – Hinduism* (1st millennium AD), as a result of the development of *Vedic teachings* and *Brahmanism.*

The interpretation of ancient religious texts written in Sanskrit, upon deep analysis, revealed numerous instances of relatedness with European languages. From this, we can already assume the formation of a religious-linguistic worldview (e. g., concepts of karma and their verbalization) – a precursor to future theolinguistics. Further scientific observations led to the development of new scientific theories, which refuted previous views, such as the hypothesis that all dialects originated from a divine source, characteristic of the population of the Near East (10th century BC), and dismissed the need for linguistic analysis of the first sacred texts of ancient Indo-Europeans, such as the Indian Vedas (literally "knowledge"), created by Aryan tribes of shepherds (2nd–1st millennia BC)[6].

Through prolonged scientific attempts to find commonalities and differences among various languages, the first intuitive principles of proto-language re-

4 Синоніміка англійського дієслова. Словник семантичних відстаней: понад 5500 словникових статей / М.Е. Білинський. Л.: ЛДУ ім. Івана Франка, 1999. С. 582.

5 The Encyclopaedia Britannica. A Dictionary of Arts, Sceinces, Literature & General Information. 13th ed. London: The Britannica, Inc., 1926. Vol. 19. P. 1122.

6 Joshi M.S. Anubhūtisvarūpācārya and hisSārasvataprakriyā: a critical, historical, and textualstudy of the Sārasvata school of Sanskrit grammar. Vadodara: Mahiman Publishing House, 2011. 656 p.

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construction emerged as evidence for the origin of all languages from a single source with systematic correspondences. Thus, a scientific understanding of the concept of *reconstruction* gradually took shape, associated exclusively with ***the methodological procedure aimed at searching for something.*** In the process of reconstructing the roots of Indo-European genetic relatedness, a new method in linguistics of that time was introduced—the comparative-historical method—with its key procedures: internal and external reconstruction of phonetic and morphological levels, which indicated that the original system of linguistic communication could be reconstructed.

Based on an understanding of the laws that allowed comparison of forms and words that had lost their external resemblance (*unattested language*) but shared meaning from a common source—genetically related to Sanskrit—researchers succeeded in reconstructing the early stages of the derivation of these linguistic forms. Initially, comparisons (reconstructions) were made based on cognates—words with common origins and similar sounds in two or more languages, known as *cognates* (from Latin *cognati*, meaning "related"), which arose through historical language interaction and linguistic borrowing over time (rather than space).

Subsequent studies were carried out by the Neogrammarians of Leipzig University (K. Brugmann, B. Delbrück, H. Osthoff, H. Paul), Danish linguists (K. Verner, W. Thomsen), Norwegian S. Bugge, Frenchman M. Bréal, Italian G.-I. Ascoli, Russian P. Fortunatov, and American W.-D. Whitney. While they protested against the search for a proto-language and emphasized the need to study living languages in their historical development, they demonstrated that "cognates with identical spelling and phonetic form (Eng. *shape*) denote the same or similar concepts, thus confirming the genetic relatedness of languages"[7].

An accurate assessment of these correspondences enabled the reconstruction of early phonetic levels of languages and, ultimately, the sound system of the Indo-European proto-language. Specifically, phonetic-morphological patterns were established in Germanic languages based on K. Verner's law: (a) "voiceless fricative consonants resulting from Germanic consonant shifts (*h, þ, f*), as well as Indo-European *s* (which remained unchanged), should be voiced if the preceding vowel did not bear the Indo-European primary accent; (b) voicing did not occur in initial positions or combinations such as *xt (ht), xs (hs), ft, fs, sk, st, sp, ss*"[8].

Another law that contrasted classical languages such as Sanskrit, Latin, and Greek on one side and Germanic languages on the other was Grimm's Law. It proposed three possible consonant shifts:

7 Кочерган М.П. Загальне мовознавство: підр. для студ. філол. спец. вузів. К.: Академія, 1999. 288 с.

8 Verner K.A. Eine Ausnahme der ersten Lautverschiebung // *KZ 23.* 1876. S. 97.

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a) $p, t, k \rightarrow f, \theta, h;$
b) $b^h, d^h, g^h \rightarrow b, d, g;$
c) $b, d, g \rightarrow p, t, k$[9].

Incidentally, unlike W. von Humboldt's stadial concept of the "constant improvement of language"[10], Romantic linguists favored the recognition of ancient classical languages (Sanskrit, Ancient Greek, Latin) as morphologically the most perfect. They championed the idea of the "unity of nation and language"[11].

Based on sound correspondences in Indo-European languages, Indo-European etymology began to be developed in linguistics, primarily thanks to the work of former theologian August Friedrich Pott, a colleague of Franz Bopp and author of works dedicated to the languages of South Africa, the Indonesian island of Java, Japan, and Rome[12].

In general, the issue of *reconstruction* before the 19th century, against the backdrop of the emergence of early religious beliefs, concerned a narrow focus on the search for answers regarding the set of meanings of words derived from a common root—proto-forms or original linguistic models (***reconstruction of the original linguistic state***). These efforts were somewhat primitive or naive in their practical methods of language analysis, often based on fragments of sacred and artistic texts. However, this was a necessary step for the future development of the classification of different language families: Indo-European, Proto-Afroasiatic, Proto-Dravidian, Proto-Altaic, Proto-Eskimo-Aleut, Korean, and Uralic language families, which were spoken in most parts of Europe, North Africa, and Asia, and are hypothesized to have descended from the Nostratic language[13].

The reconstruction of the original word form from the monogenetic Proto-Indo-European language, spoken by the population of Central Europe and South Asia, is presented in August Schleicher's work *Compendium der Vergleichenden Grammatik der Indogermanischen Sprachen*[14]. This work hypothesized the

9 Marchant Douse T. Le Grimm's law: a study, or hints towards an explanation of the so-called "lautverschiebung"; to which are added some remarks on the primitive Indo-European k and several appendices. London: Trübner and Company; [etc., etc.], 1876. 264 p.

10 Humboldt A. von Gesammelte Werke von Alexander von Humboldt. Stuttgart: J.G. Cotta, 1889. Vol. 10. 288 S.

11 Иванов В.В. Лингвистика третьего тысячелетия: вопросы к будущему. М.: Языки славянской культуры, 2004. 208 с., ил. (Studia Philologica).

12 Bopp F., Eastwick E.B., Wilson H.H. A Comparative Grammar of the Sanscrit, Zend, Greek, Latin, Lithuanian, Gothic, German and Slavonic Languages. 1853. URL: https://archive.org/details/acomparativegra01wilsgoog.

13 Greenberg J. Language Typology: A Historical and Analytic Overview. Netherland: Mouton & Co., 1974. 82 p.

14 Schleicher A. Compendium der Vergleichenden Grammatik der Indogermanischen Sprachen. Weimar, H. Böhlau, 1861. URL: https://archive.org/details/compendiumderve06schlgoog.

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